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December 20, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90

Enclosed please find a letter from 11 rural Mississippi broadband providers requesting that the Commission increase funding for participants in the Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) plan. Funding the A-CAM plan as requested will result in significant additional broadband connectivity for the rural consumers in Mississippi.

I ask that you take into consideration and act with approval to fund the A-CAM plan as requested so that more rural Mississippi residents can fully utilize the opportunities afforded by access to broadband. I also urge you to expeditiously evaluate additional universal service funding for those Mississippi rural carriers not participating in the A-CAM plan.

Thank you for your time and dedication to such an important matter.

Sincerely,



Attachment

December 7, 2017

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Ms. Dortch:

We are rural telecommunications carriers that elected the revised offer of Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) support in Mississippi. We urge the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”) to take action before the end of this year to authorize additional A-CAM funding up to \$200/month per eligible customer location to bring the broadband connectivity necessary for jobs, education, healthcare, and economic development to more rural consumers in our State.

The companies in Mississippi that elected the revised offer of A-CAM support committed to deploy broadband to a specific number of additional locations if further funding were made available by December 31, 2017. We are ready, willing and able to meet those additional broadband deployment obligations. Additional funding of \$200/month per location would result in an additional 1,359 rural consumers in Mississippi having access to a minimum of 25/3 Mbps broadband service and an additional 787 rural consumers having access to service of at least 10/1 Mbps. The number of A-CAM funded locations that would remain on “reasonable request” in Mississippi would decrease by 60% if funding were increased to this level.

Allocating this additional funding would have tremendous benefits for rural Mississippians. It is clear that access to broadband is critical to economic growth and productivity in rural areas. As Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) has said, it is “vitally important” for the Commission to ensure that the high-cost USF program provide “adequate and predictable support to help preserve and expand broadband in rural and underserved communities.”

There is no reason for the Commission to delay in providing additional funding to A-CAM plan participants. The mechanism to distribute additional funds is already in place and A-CAM companies already are upgrading their network infrastructure. Mississippi A-CAM companies are eager to further extend the reach of those networks to additional rural consumers. If we receive additional funding now, we will be able to design our network upgrades in the most efficient manner to better serve our communities.

Ms. Marlene Dortch
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For all of the foregoing reasons, we urge the Commission to act by the end of this year to allocate additional funding to carry out its original decision to provide A-CAM funding for up to \$200/month per eligible location.

Sincerely,

Christa L. Alexander
General Counsel
Vice President of Operations
Fair Telecommunications Corporation

Bay Springs Telephone Company
Bruce Telephone Company
Calhoun City Telephone Company
Delta Telephone Company
Franklin Telephone Company

Fulton Telephone Company
Mound Bayou Telephone Company
Myrtle Telephone Company
Smithville Telephone Company
Southeast Mississippi Telephone Company

cc: Chairman Ajit Pai
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Brendan Carr



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

February 13, 2018

The Honorable Roger Wicker
United States Senate
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wicker:

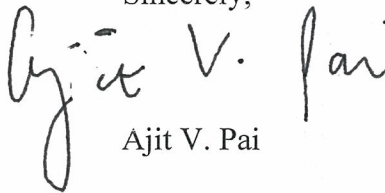
Thank you for your letter on the importance of connecting additional rural consumers in Mississippi to high-speed broadband. Your views are very important and will be entered into the record of our proceeding on the Connect America Fund and considered as part of the Commission's review.

In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants high-speed Internet access can get it. Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in urban areas. A key way to reach this goal is by updating the high-cost universal service program to encourage cooperatives and other small, rural carriers to build more online infrastructure.

We need more deployment in sparsely populated rural areas if we're going to extend digital opportunity to all Americans. But I've heard from community leaders, Congress, and carriers that insufficient, unpredictable funding has kept them from reaching this goal. That is why I recently shared with my fellow commissioners an order that would promote more high-speed broadband deployment in rural areas. If adopted, it would provide over \$500 million in additional funding for cooperatives and small rural carriers—including those participating in the Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) plan. And it seeks public input on both further increasing support to current A-CAM recipients and on giving legacy rate-of-return carriers a new chance to elect model-based support. Increased funding will boost broadband deployment in rural America, and the accompanying reforms will put our high-cost system on a more efficient path, helping to ensure that every American can benefit from the digital revolution.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai